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SUBJECT: EU: GEORGIA HUMANITARIAN AID DELIVERY SUCCESSFUL
DESPITE INITIAL GLITCHES

1.(SBU) Summary: An official at the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) said Aug. 26 that EU delivery of emergency humanitarian assistance to Georgia has been largely successful though hampered initially by coordination glitches between the EU and its member states. The EU has approved two emergency allocations in August totaling 6 million euros (USD 8.8M) for humanitarian assistance to Georgia, and it does not anticipate any more in the near term, according to Antoine Lemasson, temporarily filling in as Georgia desk officer at ECHO. ECHO had allocated 2 million euros for assistance to Georgia prior to the August crisis, bringing the total for 2008 to 8 million euros. Lemasson anticipates that ECHO will allocate an additional 2 million euros in November for fiscal 2009 beginning in January. EU member states have contributed additional humanitarian funds totaling 8.3 million euros, according to ECHO's internal tracking system, but Lemasson said the real figure is higher.

Coordinating between the EU and its members

2.(SBU) ECHO faces a perennial challenge in coordinating humanitarian assistance with its member states, and Georgia is no exception. The Directorate General for Environment activated its Monitoring and Information Center (MIC) to coordinate the various actors, and Lemasson said it largely succeeded. In the first days of the crisis, however, some EU member states (he cited France specifically) flew in planeloads of goods without coordinating with ECHO, the MIC or the government of Georgia. Lemasson said the Georgian government quickly took a strong leadership role, requesting needed items from the EU and refusing unsolicited donations.

EU chooses funding partners

3.(SBU) ECHO announced its first emergency funding decision of 1 million euros on August 10 and decided to divide it among three organizations with which it already was working in Georgia. It will give 500,000 euros to the World Food Program (WFP), 300,000 to the Danish Refugee Council, and 200,000 to the French NGO Premiere Urgence. ECHO announced an additional 5 million euros on August 15. While contracts have not been finalized yet, Lemasson said the money will likely include at least 1 million euros to ICRC, up to 1 million to WFP, 1 million euros to HALO Trust (a British demining NGO), and 30,000-40,000 euros to the French NGO Telecoms Sans Frontieres. The implementing partners have six months from the contract award to spend the money, which means that assistance for shelter, food and other necessities should carry through most of the winter, Lemasson said.

4.(SBU) Barring a change on the ground, Lemasson said current levels of humanitarian assistance appear adequate. He noted NGO difficulties in accessing South Ossetia, but said Russia has been providing sufficient assistance there. ECHO will

concentrate its efforts on other regions of Georgia. ECHO has two staff members based in Tbilisi and one in North Ossetia. An assessment mission from the EU's EuropeAid office has been in Georgia looking at longer term development and reconstruction needs beyond the immediate humanitarian assistance. The European Council is expected to discuss humanitarian and development assistance when it meets in a special session on Georgia Sept. 1.

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